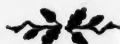


REMINISCENCES

CONNECTED WITH

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL OF MONTREAL.



"If a smile we can renew,
As our journey we pursue,
Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by."



BY VISITOR.

John Louison

To be had at Grafton and Drysdale's,
Price 10 cents.

—
MONTREAL,
1894.



GETHSEMANE.

REMINISCENCES

CONNECTED WITH THE GENERAL HOSPITAL.

About twenty years ago the General Hospital was a very different institution to what it is to-day in many ways—the wards were smaller, the nurses totally different, in age, dress and training, more of the Sarah Gamp style, and there was no regular visitation to cheer and brighten the lives of the patients. Now the different sects have their “Chaplains” appointed and paid to visit, while a number of free lances interest themselves about those who have no one to specially care for them as regards either the body or the soul. The special circumstance that brought about this change in visitation happened in this wise—A young Scotchman lay dying. He was engaged to be married to an Irish girl, a devout R.C., who was devotedly attached to the dying lad, and believing as she did that there was no salvation outside of the Roman Catholic Church, she entreated him to change from his Protestantism and become a Roman Catholic. To please the girl he consented to do so, and a priest was brought, the screens were put round the bed, and he was first baptized and then received

extreme unction, dying shortly afterwards and buried in the R.C. cemetery with the rites of the church. But one of the evening papers got hold of the story and they raised such a hullabaloo and made capital out of the case that the whole community was moved at the "shame and disgrace" of a Presbyterian from Scotland being unattended in his dying hours by a minister of that sect and thus left to the designing priest of Rome—whereas the priest of Rome had nothing to do with it, one of them was simply called in to attend a dying young man for whom none of his own denomination seemed to care, but the Superintendent of the Hospital for the time being was severely blamed for allowing it, and feeling ran very high. The outcome of it all was that a score at least of visitors, male and female, volunteered to go regularly to visit the sick and watch that such a case should not occur again. I was one of them, recommended to the directors as a suitable person by two clergymen of the city. A month or so elapsed, and I went to the minister of St. George's, now the Bishop of Montreal, who had recommended me, telling him that it was no use my going, there were such a number who went, and that without system or arrangement it seemed absurd.—His pleasant smile broke out as he said, "Wait for a month or two, you may see a change." And it was so. At the end of six months the novelty had died out, and only a very few remained, and for

many years I remain alone of those who then volunteered. But after a time the churches, as such, took up the matter. The Episcopal appointed a "chaplain," the Presbyterian a city missionary, now also called a "chaplain," while the Methodist and other sects, including the Jews, the P. B., and the S. A. visit more or less regularly, while the Y. M. C. A. holds a service for the convalescent patients at 9.30 to 10.30 a.m., and the Church of England at 4 p.m. every Sabbath, so that it cannot be said that any one is overlooked. Of course, it goes without saying that the R.C. patients are most carefully looked after by a regularly appointed priest, as well as kindly, pleasant faced nuns.

During so long a period as twenty years, of course there have been a great many interesting cases come under my immediate notice, which will be read with sympathetic interest by those who love the General Hospital, and as what I shall relate from memory (for I have kept no record of the work) breaks no confidence, nor disturbs the sanctity of either family or individual life from what I state, no harm can follow.

I met a young Scotchman from the Isle of Sky. He had come from California, where he had worked as an engineer and lost his right hand from an accident. His name was Donald McKenzie. He was both an intelligent and godly young fellow, a Baptist by denomination. The medical men could not find out what

was the matter with him, his lungs were all right, yet he wasted away to a mere skeleton. I took him the biographies of great Scotchmen to read, like Dr. Chalmers, William Arnot, or Murray McCheyne. He thanked me but said, "I only want my Bible and Spurgeon's Sermons, which are the next best thing to the Bible—these satisfy my longings as nothing else can do." One day when I called he was so weak his voice was gone. I said, "Donald, I want to write to your father when you are gone, give me his address, for I am leaving town for a few days and you may be gone before I return." He smiled and motioned he wanted my pencil to write, which I gave him. He wrote, "There is one who knows," and so, thinking some one else had visited him to whom he had given the address, I bade him a tender farewell, and another occupied his bed on my return, he was gone. I asked the nurse who had been visiting him. "No one but yourself," she said. So I drew a bow at a venture, and wrote to the Free Church Minister of the Isle of Sky, not knowing there were quite a number of parishes on the island; but my letter hit the mark, for immediately a letter was received from his father—a most interesting letter, telling me the family history. The young man's name was Donald McKimmon, McKenzie was his mother's name. When he was 13 years of age his father had married again (his mother having died when Donald was a baby) and the lad

was so mad about it he took his mother's name and went off to Glasgow and learned to be an engineer on the Clyde. When 19 years of age he was converted to God in a Baptist meeting, and at once wrote to his father asking his forgiveness for the rude way he had spoken to him and his step-mother, that he was leaving his native land to seek his fortune abroad. The father had heard that he had lost his right hand, but all the circumstances taken together assured him he was his son, and how eager they all were to learn the particulars of his illness and death. But as Henry Kirke-White wrote, "He sank as sinks the stranger in the busy streets of crowded London—a short commotion caused, a few enquiries made, the crowd pass on and all, forgotten," so it was with Donald McKenzie.

The next case I will describe has an absurd and laughable side to it, revealing what poor creatures we are at the best, when reason even to a slight degree is dethroned, and shows the difficulty of ministering to a mind diseased. About eight years ago a young man connected with an evening paper came to the Hospital and gradually got worse. The doctors kindly told him his case was hopeless and if he wanted to die in his own bed he had better leave while strength remained. He went to his home in the townships and shortly afterwards I received a letter from his mother, telling me of his death, and his parting

message to me, to which of course I replied. She sent me his photo and seemed most grateful for the blessed hope of eternal life her son had received while in the Hospital, and for a year or more her letters were most admirable, intelligent and such as an educated person would write. Then to my astonishment she began to address me as her "dear husband" and to sign herself as my "affectionate wife!" It was evident that the poor woman's mind was off its balance. Every effort has been made to induce her to stop writing her long weekly registered letter, costing 8c. Still they come, and for four or five years they have been re-stamped, re-addressed and sent back to her, so that the poor creature knows they are not read, yet still they come, always weekly and sometimes twice a week. Dr. Burgess was shown one of the letters, but he advised to let her write on, as this was the only phase of the disease, otherwise she was a good mother, housewife, and active Christian woman, but the idiosyncrasy in its development was and is most peculiar.

The next little sketch is a very blessed one first to last. I have great pleasure in describing it. There came to the Hospital one day a tall, handsome young fellow, 19 years of age. He had been out in his father's woods in the Eastern Townships felling trees, when a billet struck him in the eyes. He came to town and Dr. Buller at once removed one eye, the

other from inflammation was almost sightless. He went back home a blind young man. Some months afterwards, meeting the doctor, he asked how Levi was getting on, could he see at all? "Yes," I replied. "He sees a window when entering a room, but no individual article of furniture." "Tell him to come up to town again. I was successful with a similar case lately. I will try again." So the dear fellow was brought back to town, but the General Hospital being full, he had to go to Strong's. Alas! it was no use—the sight was irrevocably gone. But a truly blessed event took place that shines out in my memory with singular brightness. In Strong's Hospital at that time were two other patients, one a lady very deaf and almost blind, but a devoted Christian, the other also a believer, suffering from a most peculiar disease. The ligaments that sustain the neck were powerless on one side, so that his head always turned with the face looking over the left shoulder, a wooden frame kept it in its place. Now, can you picture these three patients? The lady, I think it was, suggested as they had all three been brought to the Lord, it would be delightful before parting if we had the Lord's Supper. I spoke of it to beloved Dean Baldwin, now Bishop of Huron, and he was most happy to come. But it was found that Levi had never been baptized. Shall I ever forget the rapt look on that dear lad's upturned face? The blind eyes

closed for ever, yet the spiritual sight revealed for evermore. Then the service of the supper—I must not try to describe it, words would fail me, for the Dean had to go quite close to the deaf and nearly blind lady and shout so she could hear his words, the gentleman, stuck up, as it were, in his frame, made it altogether most peculiar. Again and again I have visited dear Levi at his home, though blind he is not inactive, raising poultry and bees, and otherwise, through the greater development of his other senses, a useful man.

I must now give a sketch of a wholly different character, yet one full of sad instruction to the soul winner not to despair of even what seems the most hopeless case, but still to hear the Lord saying "Only believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The thief on the cross shows us none need despair if they cry to Jesus, but it is the only such instance given in Scripture, so that none may presume.

I met in a small, miserable cell in the jail, a young man of 28, a pure wreck, wasted with dissipation and dying of consumption—not only so as regards health, but his conscience had awoke and "the terrors of hell had got hold of him," his tears flowed as I spoke to him, but he said with sobs he was past redemption, never had lived one so guilty as he. Application was made to the judge and permission given to remove him to the General Hospital. When settled in his com-

comfortable bed and tenderly cared for, he told me his blighted history. He belonged to Plattsburg, N.Y. His father had been killed in the American war, leaving a sister and himself with his widowed mother. They attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Hall. He was a member of his Bible Class and the family were on the most intimate terms at the Manse. When 18 years of age he broke away from home and its restraint, and for ten years had lived the life of a vagabond, wandering into almost every state in the Union, but always downward. In Montreal he was living in concubinage with a fallen woman, who one night got hold of a stranger and robbed him of \$500, which she brought to their wretched room. He gave it for safe keeping to the saloon keeper where they got their whiskey. The stranger reported his loss to the police, the woman was found, the money restored, and he got 18 months in jail, the woman 12. Although ten years had elapsed since he ran away from his mother and home, I concluded to try and verify his story by writing to the Rev. Mr. Hall and make enquiry as to its truth. Immediately the answer came back. Yes, it was quite true, every word of it. His sister married and left with her husband for a distant territory of the U.S. His mother accompanied her, but he had telegraphed to her that her lost son was found. How eagerly the poor dying fellow looked for his mother's letter, but an event meantime occurred

which drove it into the background for the time. There was living that winter for his health at the Windsor Hotel a devoted officer of H.M. army, Captain Robertson. He used to attend the now defunct noon day prayer meeting at the Y.M.C.A. and one day I asked him if he would go to the Hospital and talk to the convicted sinner. "Seeing that one soweth and another reapeth," he might reap where my efforts were powerless. A letter came from his mother full of tender love and forgiveness as far as she was concerned, and earnestly entreating him to take and receive the gift of eternal life by a simple act of faith on Jesus the Crucified. She was an old, grey-haired woman, unable to travel, but day and night she prayed for her dear boy as she had done all these past years, and her joy was the anticipation of meeting him in the throng of the redeemed in glory. I took the letter up to read to him, but was quite startled at the changed look in his wasted face. The look of abject misery, of hopeless despair, was gone, I never saw such a transformation. Putting aside his mother's letter, he said, "Oh Mr. — that was a boss gentleman you sent to see me on Wednesday, he brought me complete deliverance from my bondage and joy for my misery. Why, what did he say? I asked. "It wasn't what he said, but what he did that opened my blind eyes. He took out his little New Testament and asked me to read a verse, which

I did. I would like you to read it again, he said, and I did. I would like you to read it a third time, and I did. What does it say? he asked. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from *all* sin.' What is the meaning of that little word "All?" And like a flash of lightning I saw that the word took in me. You have again and again repeated the verse, but my spiritual eyes were blind, I did not see the application of it to me. I believed the words and pardon and peace have followed. Oh, if it were not for disturbing the other patients I feel as if I would like to shout, Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God, for saving a sinner like me." He lived a month after that, but his joy, and hope, and peace never for a moment was obscured. I wrote to Mr. Hall and he and his wife came up to Montreal to see for themselves. It was most touching to witness the meeting, death and sin were swallowed up in victory, "This is the victory that overcometh, even your faith," 1 John, v., 4. "Dear Willie," said Mrs. Hall, "is there anything I could send you?" His wasted face lit up and he said, "I remember when I used to take tea at the Manse how nice the apple pies were, I would like to taste one again." In a few days a box with pie, cake and other delicacies came by express, but the sad line in Eccl. v. 12, came true—"Desire shall fail, for man goeth to his long home." He just looked at them and said, "Take them away, they make me sick."

I had orders as soon as he was dead to arrange for the funeral in the best manner, and bring the body down to Plattsburg, which I did. At the station a large number of the congregation were assembled with floral offerings, which they laid on the coffin, then all marched to the church. Four voices, two male and two female, sang "Rock of Ages," and "Jesus, lover of my soul," and Mr. Hall made a most touching address on this "brand plucked from the burning," this prodigal son, formerly a bright member of his Bible Class, who had broken his mother's heart, yet at the eleventh hour restored and accepted through the sovereign grace of a sin-pardoning God. The Americans do not do things by halves, and they treated me as if I had been a prince, or rather I should say, an ambassador, according as it is written, "Ye are the ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God," 11 Cor. v. 20. It was at the Easter tide when he died, and for many years after, on Easter morning, there came to me by post a truly beautiful book, photo, or other memorial to mark the day, from his cousin Carrie, "in grateful memory of Cousin Will." One of the photos, illustrative of "He is risen," is herewith shown. To God be all the praise.

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HE IS RISEN.

OUT AND INTO.

"He has brought us OUT from thence, that he might bring us IN."—(Deut. vi. : 23.)

I.

Out of the distance and darkness so deep,
 Out of the settled and perilous sleep;
 Out of the region and shadow of death,
 Out of its foul and pestilent breath;
 Out of the bondage and wearying chains,
 Out of companionship ever with stains :—

Into the light and the glory of God,
 Into the holiest, made clean by blood;
 Into his arms—the embrace and the kiss—
 Into the scene of ineffable bliss;
 Into the quiet, the infinite calm,
 Into the place of the song and the psalm.

Wonderful love that has wrought all for me !
 Wonderful work that has thus set me free !
 Wonderful ground upon which I have come !
 Wonderful tenderness, welcoming home !

II.

Out of disaster and ruin complete,
 Out of the struggle and dreary defeat ;
 Out of my sorrows and burden and shame,
 Out of the evils too fearful to name ;
 Out of my guilt and the criminal's doom,
 Out of the dreading, the terror, the gloom :—

Into the sense of forgiveness and rest,
 Into inheritance with all the blest,
 Into a righteous and permanent peace,
 Into the grandest and fullest release ;
 Into the comfort without an alloy,
 Into a perfect and confident joy.

Wonderful holiness, bringing to light !
 Wonderful grace, putting all out of sight !
 Wonderful wisdom, devising the way !
 Wonderful power that nothing could stay !

III.

Out of the horror of being alone,
 Out, and for ever, of being my own ;
 Out of the hardness of heart and of will,
 Out of the longings which nothing could fill ;
 Out of the bitterness, madness and strife,
 Out of myself, and of all I called life :—

Into communion with Father and Son,
 Into the sharing of all that Christ won;
 Into the ecstasies full to the brim,
 Into the having of all things with Him;
 Into Christ Jesus, there ever to dwell,
 Into more blessings than words e'er can tell.

Wonderful lowliness, draining my cup !
 Wonderful purpose that ne'er gave me up !
 Wonderful patience that waited so long !
 Wonderful glory, to which I belong !

IV.

Out of my poverty, into His wealth ;
 Out of my sickness, into pure health ;
 Out of the false, and into the true ;
 Out of the old man, into the New ;
 Out of what measures the full depth of "LOST !"
 Out of it all, and at infinite cost !

Into what must with that cost correspond,
 Into that which there is nothing beyond ;
 Into the union which nothing can part,
 Into what satisfies His and my heart !
 Into the deepest of joys ever had—
 Into the gladness of making God glad !

Wonderful Person, whose face I'll behold !
 Wonderful story, then all to be told !
 Wonderful all the dread way that he trod !
 Wonderful end, He has brought me to God !

M. T.

About ten years ago a young brakesman on one of our great railways got his leg crushed and had it amputated in the General Hospital. He was very despondent when ready to go out. "It was hard enough to get work with two legs, what would it be with only one?" A happy thought occurred to me which I speedily carried out. Instead of writing an appeal to the R.R. corporation to help him, I took him with me to the head office and sought an interview with one of the great men. We were shown into his office. He was writing with his back towards us. Jack (I will call him) was leaning against the wall on his crutches, one leg of his trousers hanging empty. He was a singularly good looking young fellow, though now pale from confinement. The great man looked at him steadily, then turned his eyes to me enquiringly. I briefly told him the object of our call. Could he procure him a gate keeper's place or any other he was capable of filling in his maimed condition? "Does he know telegraphy?" "No." Without another word he turned to his desk, took a slip of paper and wrote something on it. "Take this

to the head operator—good morning.” On getting outside we looked at the paper and grinned. “Teach the young man telegraphy with pay sufficient for his board, then give him a station when proficient.” Years passed, and I lost sight of my one-legged friend, till one day when in a Craig Street car a gentleman stepped in and took his seat beside me, smiling recognition. I did not know him, then it dawned upon me. “Good heavens, Jack” (we will call him) I said. “Is that you? Why, I thought you had only one leg.” “If you go to New York, and have money they fix you up wonderfully,” said he. “I went, and they gave me a false leg that works so perfectly that you can’t tell which is which.”—that my eyes had just witnessed. “I need not ask if you are prospering.” “Why, yes. I have been head of a paying station for some time and have saved money, but I am leaving for Toronto.” “Yes? Still in connection with the railway?” “Well no,” hesitating and looking sheepish, “I am entering college!” “What, Theology?” “Yes. I have saved enough to carry me through the course of study, and with economy and plod I expect to succeed.”

Another turn of the kaleidoscope, called the course of time, occurs, and last fall another patient is brought to the Hospital, this time a young Englishman, who, for lack of other employment, had engaged in car shunting, and before a week was over had his right

arm squeezed into pulp and amputated from the shoulder at the General Hospital. He was one of the brightest and jolliest young fellows I ever met with. Nothing could depress Tom (we will call him). "Oh, he would get along, no fear, the railroad was sure to do something for him." Of which I was not so sure. He healed up in a marvellously short time and presented himself at the headquarters of the railway. They were exceedingly kind and sympathetic, and so polite, could not be more so, but—ah, there was the rub—no opening at present—call again. This was repeated three times, meantime, Tom was eating his head off and running up a bill at his boarding house ; so he came to me and another happy thought occurred to me. I wrote out the case of Jack just as narrated above and sent it to the big man of the company, telling him if he would examine the legs of the city clergymen he would find that one of them had a leg made of steel springs and one of flesh and blood, and if he was asked the question he would tell you, yes, he was once a brakeman and a telegraph operator, now a soul saver and a successful pastor ! The whirligig of time had wrought a marvellous change and all because a kind Scotchman had given the opportunity to rise in the social, intellectual and spiritual life. Now, I wrote, do you the same for Tom that was done for Jack, he is in every way equal to him in vim and snap, all he wants is the opportunity. Whether

it was the way of putting it or the grotesqueness of the case, I don't know, but Tom was requested to call again, this time to see the Boss, who, doubtless struck with the open, honest English face of the dear fellow, as well as by the fitness of things, sent him off to a distant station to learn telegraphy with his left hand. Tom has no ambition to "wag his heid in a pupit," as the Scotch say, but he is determined to emulate Sir Donald or Sir Joseph and become a first-rate railroader and do credit to the position in life in which it has pleased God to call him. Hallelujah!

In September a young gentleman came to the Hospital from Nova Scotia to be treated for a disease almost invariably fatal, not more than two per cent. of the operations were successful. This he was told. His near death was certain any way, and there was the slight peradventure of his case being one of the successful ones. He took a week to consider of it, then decided he should put himself into the surgeon's hands—for life or death. The situation was enough to solemnize the most thoughtless, and it was little heed he had given to ought beyond the things of time and sense, but now eternity with all its unknown possibility lay before him, he was inclined to listen. The operation was performed successfully, and he lay for days between life and death, but his excellent constitution seemed to triumph, as he slowly recovered strength. On November 18th, the day set apart by

Government as a day of thanksgiving. I sat at his bedside talking of the many causes for thanksgiving. When he said as he lay on his back, "No one has more occasion to return thanks than I," I did not at the moment take in the full significance of his words, it was the look that accompanied them that made me put the question, had he accepted Christ as his Saviour? The tears filled his eyes and ran down each side of his face as he humbly said, "Yes, I believe I have passed through death into life." (Someone has said they always dreaded a dry-eyed conversion.) That was a memorable day of thanksgiving. Slowly his strength returned till the 13th of February. I had gone into the next ward for half an hour, when the nurse in passing said, "Walter is dead. If you had gone to him when you arrived, you might have closed his eyes." I was incredulous, yet alas! it was too true. Like a watch whose mainspring snaps, there is a whir-r-r and the works cease moving. So with Walter C—, the carefully watched operation had proved fatal. He lies in Mount Royal Cemetery with a marble monument at his head. Last summer as I passed through Dominion Square I met a lady coming from the direction of the C.P.R., carrying a small grip bag. She stopped me to ask if I would direct her to the Y.M.C.A. which of course was opposite. Said she, "I want to find a Mr. —; who knows where my brother is buried. I am married and settled

in the far West, and am on my way East to visit my home, but have lain off a day to visit my brother's grave." "What was your brother's name?" Walter C——." "By a peculiar coincidence I am Mr. ——, and after dinner we will together visit the cemetery, for I alone know his place of rest." Her heart was very full as she knelt at the grave and wept, reading as she was able, the comforting words engraved on the marble.—"We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.—Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—1 Thess. iv. : 13, 14, 18.

Many, many other instances might be adduced, the difficulty is where to choose, but the above will show how graciously God works, and how beneficent in all its operations is the work carried on in the old and increasingly valued General Hospital of Montreal.

VISITOR.

MINISTRY.

The memory of a kindly word,
 For long gone by ;
 The fragrance of a fading flower,
 Sent lovingly ;
 The gleaming of a sudden smile
 Or sudden tear ;
 The warmer pressure of the hand,
 The tone of cheer ;
 The hush that means " I cannot speak,
 But I have heard ! "
 The note that only bears a verse
 From God's own word ;—
 Such tiny things we scarcely count
 As ministry ;
 The givers deeming they have shown
 Scant sympathy.
 But when the heart is overwrought,
 Oh who can tell
 The power of such little things
 To make it well !
Frances Ridley Havergal.